

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY
"ISIDOR TODORAN" DOCTORAL SCHOOL

**MARK EUGENIC OF EPHESUS – THE MAN, HIS
WORK AND HIS RECEPTION**

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SUMMARY

Key words: Mark Eugenicus, council, Ferrara - Florence, the man, work, reception, unity, restoration, faith.

The research topic, "Mark Eugenius of Ephesus - the man, his work and his reception" was chosen from the perspective of three main reasons.

The first reason is related to the fact that in the specialized literature, the subject of this research was not treated in a critical edition aimed at the personality of Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus. Although the subject related to the event of the Ferrara-Florence council was addressed, the person of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus was not addressed in a unitary research aimed at his life, work and the way in which he was received throughout of time. For this reason, I considered that a research that presents in an objective way is a necessity for contemporary specialized literature.

A second reason consisted of the personal desire to know better how Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus managed to keep the faith and confess it during the meetings of the Council of Ferrara - Florence, from the first half of the 15th century . In order to know the way in which he responded to the challenges that came during this synod, it is important to know his theological and cultural training, but also his life and relationship to the Christian faith.

A third reason is constituted by an answer to the following: Why are there differences in reporting in the reception of the personality of Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus?

Even during the meetings of this council in Italy, Metropolitan Mark was not received by all in a unitary way. This aspect can be observed to this day. To achieve this, it is important to discover more about the experience and manifestation of the faith that this 15th century personality achieved. Therefore, the actuality of this research is constituted by those.

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Research objectives

The main research question from which this scientific approach started was: "How was the importance of the personality of Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus manifested and what are the limits in knowing the role he had during his life?"

Through this question, I also developed the objectives that were pursued in this doctoral thesis. The objectives are:

1. The general objective:

Identifying the role of Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus in the first half of the 15th century.

2. Secondary objectives:

a. The establishment and creation of the personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus, having as background the great ecclesiastical events in which he took part in the 15th century;

b. Presentation of the way in which Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus responded to the challenges during the Council of Ferrara - Florence (1438-1439);

c. Description of the work he left as a legacy to the entire Christian world;

d. Analyzing the way in which Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus was received by his contemporaries, but also the way in which he is received by contemporary theologians and historians, both from the Eastern and the Western world.

Methodology

A first important aspect consists in establishing the three main aspects that make up the content of this research: the biographical presentation of Marcu Eugenicol, emphasizing the main stages in his life; identifying the work of Metropolitan Marcu Eugenicol, through which one can identify his theological thinking and the way in which it was received in different periods starting from the 15th century and up to the contemporary period.

A second aspect includes the concrete methods of research investigation. In the present research, we used the historical research method through the three components: heuristics, criticism

and interpretation offer the possibility of discovering and understanding the historical event included in this research.

The analytical, critical and descriptive methods are based on the knowledge of the main sources and bibliographic sources through which the objectives of this research are achieved.

The descriptive and the comparative method offer the presentation of the historical events in which Metropolitan Marcu Eugenicul took part, but also the perspectives and horizons that are the basis of the current stage of the research.

The inductive method contributes to sketching the perspectives offered by the research regarding this topic and to the enrichment of the historical record regarding the personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus.

The analysis of documents and sources, the interpretation of the obtained results, the connection and analysis of historical events are methods that will form the basis of research in this direction, as well as the opening of the study perspective on this subject.

As working tools, we will use the documents of the time that present us with data about the personality of this metropolitan and from his works that have been preserved until the contemporary period and to which we had access, and, last but not least, we will also refer to the most recent research that has been done on this topic.

Current research status

The actuality of the subject of this historical scientific research consists in the deep historical and theological presentation of the impressive personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus, which is still studied by contemporary theologians and historians.

If we look and search in the specialized literature, both universal and Romanian, we can see that such a subject is missing.

The particularity of the present research is shown by the fact that no work was carried out that presented the three directions related to the personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus: life, work and the way in which he was received over time.

There are studies and books that directly or indirectly address the subject of the present research, but that do not open in a single work the three directions listed above.

Only by resorting to such historical research will we better understand what was the role that Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus had in universal historiography.

The challenge of this research comes from the perspective of the fact that it is an extremely complex theme, because it appeals to three points of reference to the personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus.

It is a vast but extremely challenging subject, through which we have the opportunity to present the personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus in a more realistic setting.

From a simple analysis in order to determine and draw up the plan for the realization of this

research, we were able to ascertain the fact that even in the specialized universal literature there is no presentation of such a work dealing with this important personality of the 15th century.

In the specialized literature that exists in Romanian with direct reference to the personality of Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus, there is no critical edition that addresses this topic.

From the analysis I have done during these years of study, I have noticed that there are only a few studies that have appeared in various theological journals at different periods of time.

The first study that makes direct reference to the personality of Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus belongs to Ilie Beleuță and appeared in issue XXVI of the Theological Review, in Sibiu, in 1932.

His study bears the title: "On Mark Eugenicus, Metropolitan of Ephesus, defender of Orthodoxy".

Then, we also find several other studies on Metropolitan Marcu Eugenicul, which certain fathers and professors from the discipline of Universal Church History, have carried out over time.

Among them we can mention: father professor Milan Şesan, father professor Ioan Rămureanu, father professor Ioan - Vasile Leb.

Another more recent research is from the theologian Cătălin Teulea from the "Lucian Blaga" University in Sibiu, who conducted a study with the title "Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus and the Synod of Ferrara - Florence".

In addition to these mentioned studies, there are also the volumes dealing with the work of Metropolitan Marcu Eugenicul translated into Romanian and which are presented in the content of this work.

Thus, and through the mentioned aspect, this research presents its element of novelty through the thematic approach it proposes.

Synthesis of the main points and conclusions of the present research

A first point of this research is the life of Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus, starting from his training and preparation, which gave him the possibility of acquiring a solid position within the Council of Ferrara-Florence.

What are the main moments in the life of Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus?

We will now reproduce only some information related to the life of Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus.

He was born around 1392 in Constantinople, with the baptismal name Manuil, a descendant of a wealthy Trapezuntine family.

Although he was orphaned at the age of only 13, this did not prevent him from assimilating so much of the vast palette of the problems of culture and theology of his time, all doubled by a remarkable intelligence, so that at only 20 he was a patriarchal rhetorician.

In 1418 Manuil (Marcu) Eugenicul responded to a call to a new experience - that of a monk.

At a young age, 26 years old, but prepared with a wealth of knowledge, he retired to monastic

life for two years on the island of Antigona, in the Gulf of Nicomidia.

He received the name of monk Marcu, living during this time under the guidance of a monk, Simeon.

The greatest challenge of his life was by far the presence at the Florentine Council, where he would become the undisputed leader of the Orthodox delegation, often at odds with Emperor John VIII and his realpolitik, but firm in his convictions and in his confession.

Marcu Eugenicul died on June 23, 1444, at the age of 52. Ghenadie Scholarios, the first patriarch under the Ottomans, wrote about Mark's death like this:

"But our suffering was increased by the fact that he was taken from us before he had grown old in the virtues he had acquired, before we could sufficiently enjoy his presence, in the full power of this fleeting lives! No defect or guile could shake his mind, Nor lead his soul astray, So strong was he nourished and tempered by virtue! Even if the vault of heaven should fall, even then this man's righteousness would not be shaken, his strength would not fail, his soul would not be moved, and his mind would not be weakened by such difficult trials."

The work of Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus represents another important aspect during this research.

This issue is characterized by the following aspects:

- Are there authentic writings attributed to Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus?
- Can these writings give an original theological profile of Marcu Eugenicul?
- Can we distinguish a style of Metropolitan Marcu's writings?
- Can we consider Metropolitan Marcu Eugenicul a hesychast writer?

His monastic experience and thus doctrinal deepening in prayer gave rise to the work "On the words contained in the divine prayer: Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me", of great relevance for Eastern spirituality. His apologetic explanation is focused on the appellations by which the Incarnate Son of God is invoked and confessed.

Mark writes to us that by "Lord...those who think that Jesus is a mere man are disbelieved", by "Jesus" we are shown humanity, "Christ" contains within himself the two natures, and "Son of God" offers an answer to those what cuts to introduce in the opposite direction a merging of the threads.

Through the answer he offered to the Greek theologian Manuel Calecas (1360 – 1410), who converted to Catholicism, Metropolitan Marcu Eugenicul writes two extensive treatises on the divine being and energies.

Thus, in his writings, Marcu Eugenic also dwells on the divine light, the central theme of Hesychastic theology and a critical point in the theological dialogue with the West, which had other reference criteria both in theology and philosophy.

The deepening of the theology of uncreated energies promoted by Grigore Palama was for Marcu Eugenicul the cornerstone in his polemics with Latin theologians at the Florentine unionist

synod.

It refers to all the points that distinguish the Western Church from the Eastern one.

We can observe the complex area of the theology of Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus, which highlights a deep and solid theological training that allowed him to conduct an effective and smooth dialogue with those who supported other theological ideas.

Its reception represents a third stage of this research.

An event of such importance as the unionist synod rediscovered through the prism of the involvement of the personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus is at least revealing in relation to current ecumenism.

At the same time, in the framework of this research, the perspectives that can be exploited following such a deepening of this historical period and, especially, of the most representative participant present at the Synod of Ferrara - Florence, are pursued.

By analyzing documents and interpreting historical sources, we can enter the pages of history and identify the decisive role played by Mark of Ephesus in the Council of Ferrara - Florence.

It is also important to specify the historical context in which Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus was able to shape his own life and theology, which remains a model and a source of documentation to this day.

This theme represents a complex subject that presents the historical and theological value of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus.

Each chapter and subchapter can be a starting point for another research on the personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus.

In this research we aim to present the criteria of a scientific research, which aims at four requirements of "scientificity", proposed by Umberto Eco:

- o The work must warn of an "object" recognizable by others, that is, it must not defy the rules of human logic and clearly present the notions with which it operates;

- o He must say about that "object" things that have not been said before, see in a different light or nuance things already said;

- o It must be useful to others;

- o It must provide elements for the verification and denial of the hypotheses it presents, that is, starting from the proposed evidence, other researchers can go further, either to confirm or to deny the respective hypothesis.

Through the proposed topic and the hypotheses presented in this introduction, we believe that this scientific research related to the personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus meets the four requirements presented by Umberto Eco in order to fulfill the objectives outlined for the present work and which will be found in the conclusive results at the end of this historical and theological research.

Such an approach goes beyond the strict historical interest and constitutes a necessary investigation of the past for a mature assumption of the future.

There is, however, a question mark for anyone who approaches the history of the Middle Ages with interest, regarding the fact that there is more talk about the negative impact on the Catholic theological environment that Metropolitan Marcu Eugenicul had, through his decision at the end of the works of to assume the full responsibility of the Eastern Church, except by the actual presentation of this personality who marked the history of the fifteenth century.

This fact is still due to a lack of knowledge of the work of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus and the lack of objectivity with which some theologians and historians from the Western environment treated the biography of this personality from the 15th century.

This work also wants to fulfill this objective of providing certain answers to questions on which coherent and real results have not yet been identified regarding the impact on the pages of history that Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus wrote in the XV- lea.

The lack of a systematic work that deals with the theological relevance of the presentation of the personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus in the Romanian theological space determines the need for an in-depth study on this topic.

We have pursued all of this in this work, convinced that we will never be able to provide a complete and definitive answer and that it will also be a challenge launched for other historians to approach this religious and historical side of the personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus , in a new interpretation and theological key offered by the modern concept of ecumenical dialogue.

Conclusions:

Approaching such a research topic in the field of theology is a novelty in that the general data related to the personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus are systematically presented.

Through the activity carried out by Metropolitan Marcu Eugenicul within the Council of Ferrara - Florence from the years 1438-1439, we directly capitalized on the theological value of the personality of Metropolitan Marcu Eugenicul, taking into account his positioning during this synod and the way it manifested itself during the work sessions during the synod.

Equally relevant, for contemporary theology, the subject addressed in the content of this work capitalized on the three levels through which we can have a better access to the personality of Metropolitan Marcu Eugenicul: his biography, his work and his reception.

The element of novelty was the openness to studying the personality of Metropolitan Marcu Eugenicul, in the context of his theological and spiritual formation, in the midst of theological disputes, as a standard bearer, but also in the light he left for posterity.

This can be the general framework from which new lines of scientific research can be deepened regarding the role and importance of Metropolitan Mark Eugenicus of Ephesus. It is a novelty not only for theological research, in general, but more especially for the specialized literature

aimed at the study and research in the theological field of the Universal Church History discipline.

The personality of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus is always alive in the historical memory of the Church, because he was a landmark and a model for knowing theology, assuming and living the Christian faith and confessing the Word of God in the 15th century.

As can be determined from the plan and content of this research, the present work capitalizes on three important aspects of the mission of Metropolitan Mark Eugenikos of Ephesus: the life, the work and the way in which it was received and understood over time.

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